

BUSINESS IN NEBRASKA

August 1985
Vol. 40 No. 491

Prepared by the Bureau of Business Research, 200 College of Business Administration, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE 68588-0406, 402 472-2334

NEBRASKA RETAIL SALES, 1983-1984

Nebraska's 1984 net taxable retail sales totaled \$9,073 million, down \$116 million from the 1983 amount of \$9,189 million (Table 2, page 2). The primary reason for this decline is the difference in the tax bases between 1983 and 1984. Without this change, sales would likely have shown an increase.

The net taxable sales figures presented in this article are derived from general sales tax figures compiled by the Nebraska Department of Revenue. The sales tax applies to most retail sales and is complemented with a general use tax. Beginning in October 1983, however, the tax base was altered considerably when food items for home consumption were exempted from the sales tax. Although no precise measure of this impact has been made, it is estimated that taxable non-vehicle sales were reduced approximately 13.0 percent at the state level. Obviously this percentage varies from county to county, as more populous counties with a more diversified sales base are affected less than smaller counties. The sales figures contained in this article are the actual sales recorded and have not been adjusted to account for the difference in bases. This caveat should be kept in mind when reading the remainder of the article.

The previously mentioned loss of \$116 million dollars in total sales represents a decline of 1.3 percent. Motor vehicle sales were \$1,123 million in 1984, an increase of \$124 million (12.4 per-

cent) from 1983; non-vehicle sales in 1984 amounted to \$7,950 million, down \$240 million (2.9 percent). To compensate for price changes that occurred between 1983 and 1984, the dollar volumes of net taxable sales were adjusted by appropriate components of the consumer price index--non-vehicle sales by the commodity component and vehicle sales by the vehicle component. After adjustment for price changes, vehicle sales were up 0.9 percent, non-vehicle sales were down 6.1 percent, and total sales fell 5.3 percent.

It is possible to make a simple adjustment to the 1983-1984 percent changes to approximate the annual changes if the tax base had been the same in 1983 and 1984. To account for the effect of the elimination of food sales on total sales, 9.4 percentage points could be added to the dollar volume percent changes in Table 2, and 8.9 points could be added to the price-adjusted percent changes. The adjustments imply that with similar tax bases, total sales may have grown 8.1 percent in current dollar terms, or they might have increased 3.6 percent on a price-adjusted basis.

In a like manner, the non-vehicle changes in Table 1 could be adjusted by adding 10.4 percentage points to the dollar volume percent changes and 10.1 points to the price-adjusted (continued on page 3)

Table 1
Net Taxable Retail Sales¹ in Selected Nebraska Trading Centers
1984 and 1983

Region and County	1984 (\$000)	1983 (\$000)	Percent Change	Price Adjusted Percent Change ²	Region and County	1984 (\$000)	1983 (\$000)	Percent Change	Price Adjusted Percent Change ²
Alliance	56,801	63,547	-10.6	-13.5	McCook	73,824	80,306	-8.1	-11.1
Beatrice	74,276	85,013	-12.6	-15.5	Nebraska City	39,814	44,364	-10.3	-13.2
Bellevue	121,789	111,212	9.5	5.9	Norfolk	160,819	172,529	-6.8	-9.8
Blair	38,280	41,350	-7.4	-10.5	North Platte	150,685	170,433	-11.6	-14.5
Broken Bow	32,553	38,840	-16.2	-18.9	O'Neill	38,106	42,732	-10.8	-13.7
Chadron	29,431	33,650	-12.5	-15.4	Ogallala	47,969	51,377	-6.6	-9.7
Columbus	138,565	144,261	-3.9	-7.1	Omaha	2,639,080	2,562,833	3.0	-0.4
Fairbury	28,976	36,127	-19.8	-22.4	Scottsbluff/Gering	164,565	183,212	-10.2	-13.1
Falls City	25,917	30,442	-14.9	-17.7	Seward	33,968	37,435	-9.3	-12.2
Fremont	142,546	154,160	-7.5	-10.6	Sidney	38,477	41,163	-6.5	-9.6
Grand Island	314,493	334,622	-6.0	-9.1	South Sioux City	37,134	37,424	-0.8	-4.0
Hartington	14,807	17,109	-13.5	-16.3	Wayne	28,292	33,341	-15.1	-17.9
Hastings	151,172	159,174	-5.0	-8.1	West Point	24,696	30,059	-17.8	-20.5
Holdrege	49,338	54,008	-8.6	-11.6	York	63,489	69,751	-9.0	-12.0
Kearney	164,892	172,917	-4.6	-7.8					
Kimball	25,906	28,498	-9.1	-12.1	Total 32 Centers	6,334,785	6,154,082	-1.9	-5.2
Lexington	53,280	60,324	-11.7	-14.6	TOTAL STATE ³	7,950,068	8,190,373	-2.9	-6.1
Lincoln	1,030,845	1,031,869	-0.1	-3.4					

¹Excluding motor vehicle sales, and after October 1983 excluding food sales.

²Current dollar sales adjusted (deflated) for price changes using commodity price component of the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Price Index.

³Total state sales include some sales that cannot be allocated to cities, counties, or regions.

Source: compilations by Bureau of Business Research from special tabulations provided by Nebraska Tax Commissioner.

Table 2
Net Taxable Retail Sales¹ of Nebraska's Planning and Development Regions and Counties, 1984 and 1983

Region and County	1984 (\$000)	1983 (\$000)	Percent Change	Price Adjusted Percent Change ²	Region and County	1984 (\$000)	1983 (\$000)	Percent Change	Price Adjusted Percent Change ²
Region 1	3,323,932	3,185,311	4.4	0.1	Region 16	156,268	178,625	-12.5	-16.3
Douglas	3,016,795	2,883,349	4.6	0.5	Dawson	117,080	130,104	-10.0	-13.8
Sarpy	250,906	242,120	3.6	-1.9	Frontier	8,578	10,460	-18.0	-22.3
Washington	56,231	59,842	-6.0	-10.5	Furnas	24,051	29,429	-18.3	-21.9
Region 2	1,181,035	1,160,529	1.8	-2.4	Gosper	6,559	8,632	-24.0	-27.7
Lancaster	1,181,035	1,160,529	1.8	-2.4	Region 17	88,473	99,883	-11.4	-15.3
Region 3	56,284	58,154	3.2	-7.6	Franklin	12,934	16,063	-19.5	-23.4
Dakota	56,284	58,154	-3.2	-7.6	Harlan	14,080	17,218	-18.2	-22.2
Region 4	170,527	186,894	-8.8	-13.1	Phelps	61,459	66,602	-7.7	-11.6
Cass	54,217	57,936	-6.4	-11.3	Region 18	191,515	212,317	-9.8	-13.6
Otoe	63,455	70,762	-10.3	-14.2	Hooker	3,204	3,767	-14.9	-18.7
Saunders	52,855	58,196	-9.2	-13.7	Lincoln	182,296	201,817	-9.7	-13.4
Region 6	275,995	304,621	-9.4	-13.3	Logan	1,965	2,077	-5.4	-11.1
Burt	29,614	35,710	-17.1	-20.8	McPherson	747	625	19.5	9.3
Cuming	46,975	55,219	-14.9	-18.6	Thomas	3,303	4,031	-18.1	-21.9
Dodge	188,181	200,442	-6.1	-10.0	Region 19	108,047	116,261	-7.1	-11.0
Thurston	11,225	13,250	-15.3	-19.4	Arthur	1,051	1,135	-7.4	-12.8
Region 7	93,625	105,124	-10.9	-14.9	Chase	25,908	29,096	-11.0	-14.9
Johnson	16,104	18,858	-14.6	-18.5	Grant	3,728	3,645	2.3	-3.2
Nemaha	28,557	30,810	-7.3	11.5	Keith	58,274	63,565	-8.3	-12.0
Pawnee	8,609	10,041	-14.3	-18.3	Perkins	19,086	18,820	1.4	-3.1
Richardson	40,355	45,415	-11.1	-14.9	Region 20	111,811	121,279	-7.8	-11.8
Region 8	136,198	149,013	-8.6	-12.6	Dundy	10,206	11,979	-14.8	-19.0
Butler	25,513	28,197	-9.5	-13.7	Hayes	1,687	2,200	-23.3	-29.3
Saline	54,018	58,433	-7.6	-11.6	Hitchcock	10,864	11,904	-8.7	-13.6
Seward	56,667	62,383	-9.2	-13.2	Red Willow	89,054	95,196	-6.5	-10.3
Region 9	139,478	151,384	-7.9	-11.8	Region 21	91,566	96,879	-5.5	-9.7
Fillmore	32,576	36,547	-10.9	-14.8	Cheyenne	50,794	52,279	-2.8	-7.1
Polk	22,915	24,719	-7.3	-11.6	Deuel	9,661	11,163	-13.5	-17.7
York	83,987	90,118	-6.8	-10.6	Kimball	31,111	33,437	-7.0	-11.0
Region 10	250,473	269,567	-7.1	-11.0	Region 22	241,066	263,182	-8.4	-12.3
Boone	29,204	33,298	-12.3	-16.2	Banner	1,256	1,438	-12.7	-20.8
Colfax	32,406	40,056	-19.1	-22.7	Garden	9,039	9,834	-8.1	-12.7
Nance	12,581	14,049	-10.4	-14.8	Morrill	24,783	27,769	-10.8	-14.8
Platte	176,282	182,164	-3.2	-7.2	Scotts Bluff	205,988	224,141	-8.1	-11.9
Region 11	302,152	333,168	-9.3	-13.1	Region 23	149,554	164,975	-9.3	-13.3
Antelope	27,289	35,065	-22.2	-25.8	Box Butte	71,463	76,586	-6.7	-10.8
Madison	205,947	219,164	-6.0	-9.8	Dawes	39,991	44,013	-9.1	-13.0
Pierce	23,778	27,383	-13.2	-17.2	Sheridan	34,736	40,916	-15.1	-18.7
Stanton	10,592	11,393	-7.0	-12.4	Sioux	3,364	3,460	-2.8	-9.3
Wayne	34,546	40,163	-14.0	-17.6	Region 24	128,175	147,933	-13.4	-17.1
Region 12	441,116	467,045	-5.6	-9.4	Boyd	7,495	9,334	-19.7	-23.3
Hall	359,831	378,383	-4.9	-8.7	Brown	19,825	22,679	-12.6	-16.2
Hamilton	33,945	36,190	-6.2	-10.6	Cherry	30,140	35,057	-14.0	-17.7
Howard	20,130	22,432	-10.3	-14.5	Holt	61,062	69,349	-11.9	-15.7
Merrick	27,210	30,040	-9.4	-13.6	Keya Paha	2,168	2,441	-11.2	-16.3
Region 13	249,949	268,823	-7.0	-10.9	Rock	7,485	9,073	-17.5	-21.4
Adams	178,118	185,130	-3.8	-7.7	Region 25	79,241	94,361	-16.0	-19.8
Clay	27,739	31,159	-11.0	-15.1	Cedar	3,3034	39,985	-17.4	-21.0
Nuckolls	30,408	35,457	-14.2	-17.9	Dixon	12,987	15,006	-13.5	-18.0
Webster	13,684	17,077	-19.9	-23.6	Knox	33,220	39,370	-15.6	-19.3
Region 14	171,227	196,559	-12.9	-16.6	Region 26	111,044	129,866	-14.5	-18.2
Gage	100,320	113,832	-11.9	-15.7	Blaine	1,506	1,704	-11.6	-16.6
Jefferson	42,288	50,074	-15.5	-19.1	Custer	53,243	62,473	-14.8	-18.4
Thayer	28,619	32,653	-12.4	-16.1	Garfield	10,228	11,840	-13.6	-17.2
Region 15	238,859	251,350	-5.0	-8.9	Greeley	8,805	10,890	-19.1	-22.9
Buffalo	214,849	222,353	-3.4	-7.3	Loup	1,201	1,551	-22.6	-27.7
Kearney	24,010	28,997	-17.2	-21.1	Sherman	9,407	11,547	-18.5	-22.4
					Valley	24,835	27,717	-10.4	-14.0
					Wheeler	1,819	2,144	-15.2	-21.2
STATE TOTAL ³						9,073,422	9,189,408	-1.3	-5.3

¹Motor vehicle sales are recorded as in counties in which the vehicles were first registered, regardless of point of sale.

²Current dollar sales adjusted (deflated) for price changes using commodity price component of the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Price Index

³Total state sales include some sales that cannot be allocated to cities, counties, or regions

Source: compilations by Bureau of Business Research from special tabulations provided by Nebraska Tax Commissioner

(continued from page 1)

percent changes. From this, it can be seen that the change in the state's non-vehicle sales would increase from a 2.9 percent loss to a 7.5 percent gain; on a price-adjusted basis, a 6.1 percent loss would become 4.0 percent growth. It is important to remember that the above adjustments are for illustration only, as there is no way of determining the actual adjustments necessary. For the remainder of the article, however, comparisons will be made for those counties with total sales declines of 9.4 percent or less and those with losses exceeding 9.4 percent.

The geographic distribution of net taxable retail sales by planning region and county, with respective changes that occurred between 1983 and 1984, can be found in Table 2. Again, it should be noted that the 1983 and 1984 sales data have not been adjusted to account for the loss of food sales.

Of the twenty-five state planning regions, only two recorded gains in the dollar volume of sales in 1984. These regions were Region 1, +4.4 percent, and Region 2, +1.8 percent. An additional fourteen areas reported losses in sales of less than 9.4 percent. On a price-adjusted basis, only Region 1 experienced an increase in sales.

Map 1 shows that eight regions recorded losses in net taxable sales greater than 9.4 percent. These regions generally were located in the central third of the state, with the exceptions of Regions 7 and 14 in the southeast and Region 25 in the northeast. The state's largest drop in sales occurred in Region 25, with a decline of 16.0 percent.

Table 2 and Map 2 illustrate how Nebraska's counties fared between 1983 and 1984. Six of the state's ninety-three counties recorded net taxable sales in 1984 above those of 1983, with an additional thirty-one with losses of less than 9.4 percent. The growing counties were concentrated in the metropolitan areas of eastern Nebraska and in some of the more sparsely populated counties in western Nebraska. Counties with the increases in sales were McPherson, +19.5 percent; Douglas, +4.6 percent; Sarpy, +3.6 percent; Grant, +2.3 percent; Lancaster, +1.8 percent; and Perkins, +1.4 percent.

Of the counties with losses in taxable sales in 1984, twenty-three had losses of more than 15 percent, including four with losses over 20 percent. These counties generally were located

throughout the central portion of the state, with concentrations in the northeast and south central areas. The largest declines were Gosper, -24.0 percent; Hayes, -23.3 percent; Loup, -22.6 percent; and Antelope, -22.2 percent.

Data on retail sales for thirty-two Nebraska cities are found in Table 1 on page 1. These sales exclude motor vehicle sales, which are counted at the county in which the vehicle is registered. The state total in Table 1, therefore, is for non-vehicle sales and differs from the total in Table 2, which is for both motor vehicle and non-vehicle sales.

Statewide, non-vehicle sales fell 2.9 percent in 1984, but for the aggregate of the thirty-two cities, the loss was 1.9 percent. Again, it should be remembered that the reason for this decline is the diminished sales tax base in 1984.

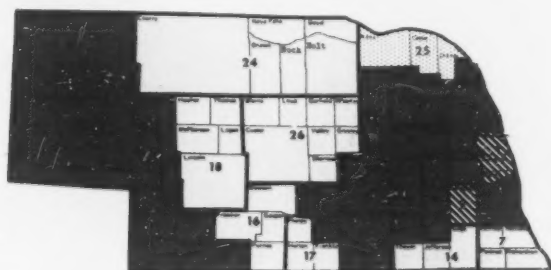
Of the thirty-two communities listed in Table 1, only two reported increases in their dollar volume of sales in 1984. These cities were Bellevue, +9.5 percent, and Omaha, +3.0 percent. Eighteen of the remaining cities reported losses of less than 10.4 percent (the estimated impact of the loss of food sales from the tax base). Some of these cities are Lincoln, -0.1 percent; South Sioux City, -0.8 percent; Columbus, -3.9 percent; Kearney, -4.6 percent; and Hastings, -5.0 percent.

Twelve of the thirty-two cities in Table 1 reported losses greater than 10.4 percent. Those with the largest losses were Fairbury, -19.8 percent; West Point, -17.8 percent; Broken Bow, -16.2 percent; and Wayne, -15.1 percent.

In summary, it appears that without the change in the tax base, Nebraska's net taxable retail sales would have shown a moderate increase of approximately 3 to 4 percent in real terms in 1984 compared to 1983. As it stands, however, the actual change will never be known. The strongest areas of sales were the metropolitan counties and larger cities of the state. In addition, concentrations of relative strength could be found in east-central and northwest Nebraska. The weakest counties were concentrated in the central and northeastern part of the state. Looking to 1985, it appears that sales are running ahead of their 1984 pace and should finish the year with moderate growth. Because the tax bases should be the same in 1984 and 1985, more accurate year-to-year comparisons can be made.

(continued on page 6)

Map 1
Percentage Change in Net Taxable Retail Sales by Region, 1983-1984



0.0% or greater
-0.1% to -9.4%
-9.5% to -15.0%
less than -15.0%

State -1.3%

Map 2
Percentage Change in Net Taxable Retail Sales by County, 1983-1984



0.0% or greater
-0.1% to -9.4%
-9.5% to -15.0%
less than -15.0%

State -1.3%

Review and Outlook

Nebraska's nonagriculture economy edged up 0.5 percent March-April 1985. Once again, cash farm marketings were not available from the United States Department of Agriculture. Prices received by Nebraska farmers and ranchers were disheartening—they declined 3.5 percent on a month-to-month basis in April 1985 to a level 11.5 percent below one year ago.

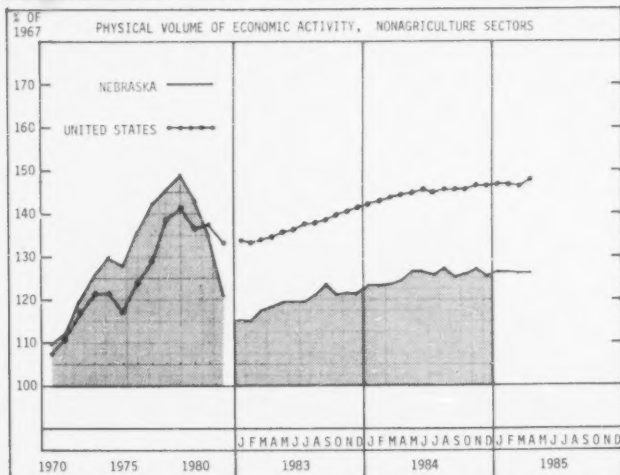
Construction led the nonagriculture segment of Nebraska's economy. This component of the Bureau of Business Research's index increased 5.6 percent on a monthly basis. Manufacturing, distributive trade (which includes wholesale and retail trade and services), and government recorded small monthly changes.

Charles Bare, Research Associate at the Bureau of Business Research, has designed a series of leading economic indicators for Nebraska. The most recent reading of this index showed an upturn in economic activity. The chart below shows a peak late in 1985 followed by a slow downward drift. If the index continues to improve over the next two months or if no new low is established over the next three months, this could indicate an upswing in the Nebraska economy in the third and fourth quarters which could carry into the first half of 1986.

The national economy is expected to show renewed vigor during the last half of 1985 and the first half of 1986, so it (continued on page 5)

Notes for Tables 1 and 2: (1) The "distributive" indicator represents a composite of wholesale and retail trade; transportation, communication and utilities; finance, insurance, and real estate; and selected services. (2) The "physical volume" indicator and its components represent the dollar volume indicator and its components adjusted for price changes using appropriate price indexes—see Table 5, page 5.

ECONOMIC INDICATORS: NEBRASKA AND UNITED STATES				
1. CHANGE FROM PREVIOUS YEAR				
April 1985	Current Month as Percent of Same Month Previous Year		1985 to date as percent of 1984 to date	
Indicator	Nebraska	U.S.	Nebraska	U.S.
Dollar Volume	na	na	na	na
Agricultural	na	na	na	na
Nonagricultural	105.1	105.8	106.0	106.2
Construction	91.4	105.5	97.0	107.3
Manufacturing	100.7	100.7	102.8	102.2
Distributive	105.4	107.3	105.8	107.4
Government	114.8	107.6	114.6	106.8
Physical Volume	na	na	na	na
Agricultural	na	na	na	na
Nonagricultural	101.7	102.4	102.4	102.8
Construction	88.6	102.3	93.2	103.1
Manufacturing	101.2	100.4	102.7	101.6
Distributive	101.7	103.5	102.0	103.6
Government	105.6	101.3	105.7	101.3
2. CHANGE FROM 1967				
Indicator	Percent of 1967 Average			
	Nebraska	U.S.		
Dollar Volume	na	na		
Agricultural	na	na		
Nonagricultural	377.0	447.2		
Construction	293.9	433.7		
Manufacturing	370.1	326.7		
Distributive	382.2	513.5		
Government	416.5	455.9		
Physical Volume	na	na		
Agricultural	na	na		
Nonagricultural	126.7	147.6		
Construction	82.1	121.1		
Manufacturing	148.9	128.2		
Distributive	119.4	160.4		
Government	151.6	149.8		



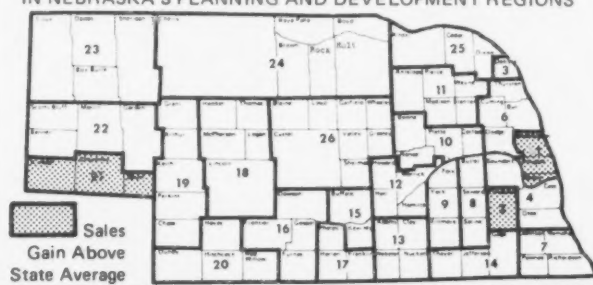
3. NET TAXABLE RETAIL SALES OF NEBRASKA REGIONS AND CITIES			
Region Number ¹ and City	City Sales ²	Sales in Region ²	
	April 1985 as percent of April 1984	April 1985 as percent of April 1984	1985 to date as percent of 1984 to date
The State	101.5	99.9	103.3
1 Omaha	109.7	107.2	110.7
Bellevue	114.2		
Blair	99.7		
2 Lincoln	106.5	105.2	106.2
3 So. Sioux City	96.7	92.9	102.8
4 Nebraska City	99.2	93.9	93.7
6 Fremont	98.5	91.7	96.8
West Point	81.0		
7 Falls City	99.9	93.0	94.0
8 Seward	91.7	89.7	89.5
9 York	102.3	96.2	94.9
10 Columbus	92.4	87.0	94.9
11 Norfolk	92.6	90.5	98.6
Wayne	79.7		
12 Grand Island	97.4	95.1	100.0
13 Hastings	95.9	89.6	96.3
14 Beatrice	107.1	99.7	93.9
Fairbury	102.8		
15 Kearney	96.5	93.2	94.4
16 Lexington	98.6	90.7	94.2
17 Holdrege	92.1	91.4	92.2
18 North Platte	97.8	94.7	92.7
19 Ogallala	95.5	96.0	89.7
20 McCook	95.6	90.3	95.4
21 Sidney	100.8	100.6	103.1
Kimball	104.4		
22 Scottsbluff/Gering	97.8	95.7	98.3
23 Alliance	100.4	97.6	99.1
Chadron	93.6		
24 O'Neill	96.9	89.6	92.9
25 Hartington	86.3	90.0	93.5
26 Broken Bow	98.4	97.5	94.4

¹ See region map below.

² Sales on which sales taxes are collected by retailers located in the state. Region totals include motor vehicle sales; city totals exclude motor vehicle sales.

Compiled from data provided by Nebraska Department of Revenue.

1985 YEAR TO DATE AS PERCENT OF 1984 YEAR TO DATE IN NEBRASKA'S PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT REGIONS



MEASURING NEBRASKA BUSINESS

(continued from page 4)

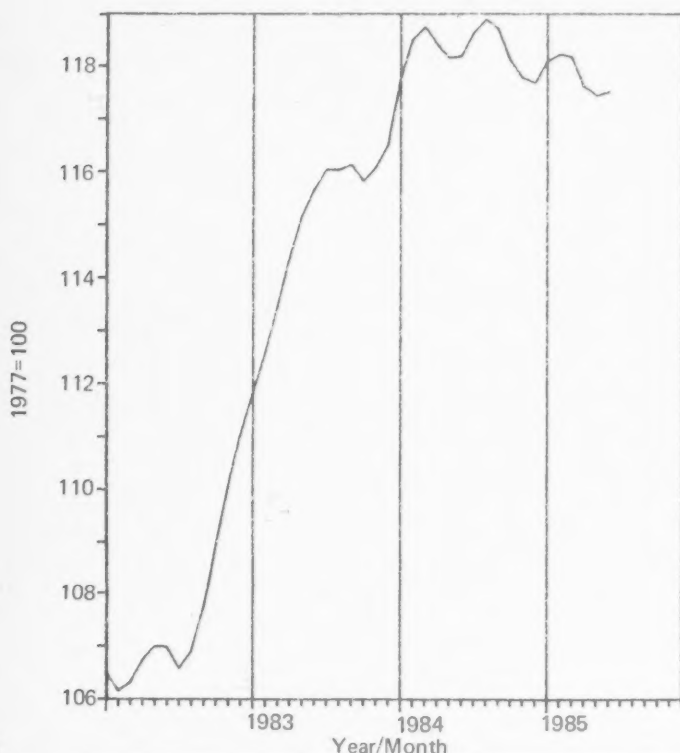
would not be outside the realm of likely events if the state economy were also to improve. Lower interest rates are now beginning to stimulate the economy and are expected to boost the economy over the next few quarters.

Retail sales in Nebraska slumped in April. Total retail sales were down 2.6 percent on a price adjusted basis compared with one year earlier. Motor vehicle sales dropped 13.5 percent on a price adjusted basis, while nonmotor vehicle sales fell 0.8 percent on a price adjusted basis. The April 1985 sales changes should be viewed in the context of exceptionally strong April 1984 motor vehicle sales.

Chadron led all Nebraska cities with a large increase in its city business index. Chadron's improvement reflects a rise in building activity. Fairbury ranked second, and Beatrice third. Omaha followed Beatrice with a 3.6 percent gain in its city business index. Both Omaha and Lincoln have consistently outperformed the state's economy and continue to lead in economic growth.

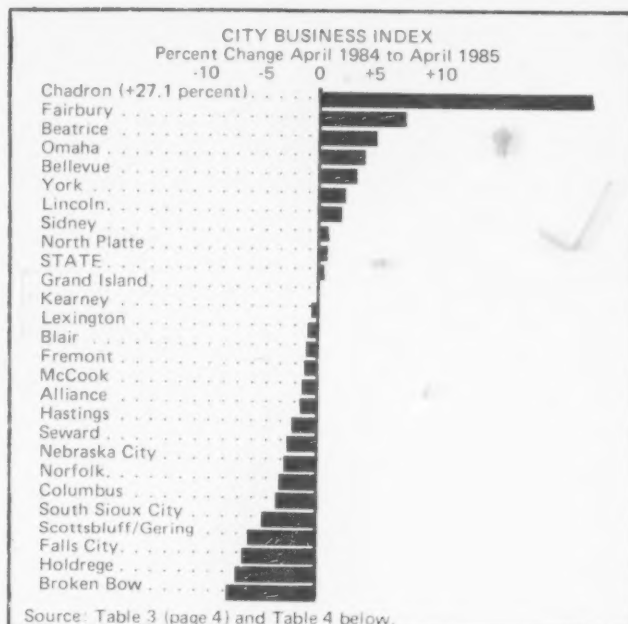
DONALD E. PURSELL

Nebraska Composite Leading Index



5. PRICE INDEXES			
April 1985	Index (1967 = 100)	Percent of Same Month Last Year	Year to Date as Percent of Same Period Last Year*
Consumer Prices	320.1	103.7	103.7
Commodity component	286.8	102.4	102.2
Wholesale Prices	309.3	99.4	99.8
Agricultural Prices			
United States	238.0	89.8	92.3
Nebraska	230.0	88.5	92.6

*Using arithmetic average of monthly indexes.
Sources: Consumer and Wholesale Prices: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics; Agricultural Prices: U.S. Department of Agriculture.



Source: Table 3 (page 4) and Table 4 below.

4. April 1985 CITY BUSINESS INDICATORS			
The State and Its Trading Centers	Percent of Same Month a Year Ago		
	Employment ¹	Building Activity ²	Power Consumption ³
The State	102.2	92.7	88.0
Alliance	101.8	79.2	95.3
Beatrice	100.1	172.3	78.2
Bellevue	101.5	54.4	76.7
Blair	101.5	100.7	90.4*
Broken Bow	102.6	17.3	87.0
Chadron	114.6	15,957.6	82.9
Columbus	99.8	94.0	78.4
Fairbury	101.4	408.5	88.6
Falls City	104.3	15.9	83.7
Fremont	103.6	88.9	114.7*
Grand Island	101.1	142.0	84.1
Hastings	100.7	107.4	na
Holdrege	102.8	33.8	78.9
Kearney	105.2	99.5	79.2
Lexington	103.5	93.6	90.1
Lincoln	102.0	88.8	86.9
McCook	99.6	154.7	79.8
Nebraska City	103.2	48.2	62.7
Norfolk	103.7	66.0	89.7
North Platte	105.5	101.5	79.4
Omaha	101.5	94.6	89.5
Scottsbluff/Gering	101.1	26.8	141.9
Seward	103.1	110.4	77.3
Sidney	101.3	115.5	84.3
So. Sioux City	98.3	52.7	88.7*
York	102.4	128.2	77.6

¹ As a proxy for city employment, total employment for the county in which a city is located is used.

² Building Activity is the value of building permits issued as spread over an appropriate time period of construction. The U.S. Department of Commerce Composite Construction Cost Index is used to adjust construction activity for price changes.

³ Power Consumption is a combined index of consumption of electricity and natural gas except in cases marked * for which only one is used.

Source: Compilation by Bureau of Business Research from reports of private and public agencies.

HOUSING UNITS AUTHORIZED

The fact that residential construction has experienced hard times in recent years should surprise no one. What is not so well known is the extent of the decline and the extent to which construction has rebounded in the last year or so. Listed in the table below are the numbers of new privately owned housing units authorized by building permits as released by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. Data are presented for the state and for selected areas. Although these data do not translate directly into private housing units built in any given year, they are likely to be close estimates. Caution should be used when interpreting percentage changes where the total number of permits issued is small; small absolute changes may result in large percentage changes.

The data presented are for 1977 (the most recent peak at the state level) and 1982-1984. From the table, it can be seen that

the 6,053 units authorized in Nebraska represent a decline of 46.5 percent from 1977, but an increase of 67.5 percent from the low of 1982 and a 10.8 percent increase from 1983. Despite the general decline in the number of authorized units between 1977 and 1984, Papillion was up 262.8 percent, unincorporated Sarpy County added 29.5 percent, McCook was unchanged, and Omaha dropped only 1.2 percent.

Comparing 1982 to 1984, the strongest areas in terms of percentage change were Lincoln, Nebraska City, Fremont, Norfolk, North Platte, and Plattsmouth. The weakest areas over the same period were LaVista, Beatrice, Chadron, unincorporated Hall County, Scottsbluff, Grand Island and Lexington.

JEROME A. DEICHERT

NUMBER OF NEW PRIVATELY OWNED HOUSING UNITS AUTHORIZED BY BUILDING PERMITS IN PERMIT-ISSUING PLACES

	1977	1982	1983	1984	1977 to 1984	Percentage Change 1982 to 1984	1983 to 1984
Adams County (unincorporated)*	194	42	41	34†	-82.5	-19.0	-17.1
Alliance	288	5	12	5	-98.3	0.0	-58.3
Beatrice	134	67	41	9	-93.3	-86.6	-78.0
Bellevue	428	221	328	247	-42.3	11.8	-24.7
Blair	59	24	19	27	-54.2	12.5	42.1
Chadron	26	22	6	4†	-84.6	-81.8	-33.3
Columbus	329	68	87	79	-76.0	16.2	-9.2
Fremont	202	12	17	32†	-84.2	166.7	88.2
Gering	149	13	13	10	-93.3	-23.1	-23.1
Grand Island	461	152	91	61	-86.8	-59.9	-33.0
Hall County (unincorporated)	133	45	46	9	-93.2	-80.0	-80.4
Kearney	317	162	153	187	-41.0	15.4	22.2
La Vista	154	62	32	5	-96.8	-91.9	-84.4
Lexington	181	23	24	11	-93.9	-52.2	-54.2
Lincoln	2,343	234	1,000	1,279	-45.4	446.6	27.9
McCook	38	52	75	38	0.0	-26.9	-49.3
Nebraska City	61	4	4	20	-67.2	400.0	400.0
Norfolk	299	37	80	86	-71.2	132.4	7.5
North Platte	223	14	28	29	-87.0	107.1	3.6
Ogallala	56	25	37	21	-62.5	-16.0	-43.2
Omaha	2,151	1,103	1,776	2,125	-1.2	92.7	19.7
Papillion	78	174	295	283	262.8	62.6	-4.1
Plattsmouth	48	11	34	22	-54.2	100.0	-35.3
Sarpy County (unincorporated)	224	215	299	290	29.5	34.9	-3.0
Scottsbluff	78	39	31	14	-82.1	-64.1	-54.8
South Sioux City	182	14	19	26	-85.7	85.7	36.8
NEBRASKA	11,322	3,614	5,465	6,053	-46.5	67.5	10.8

*Includes Hastings

†Eleven months

Source: U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, *Housing Units Authorized by Building Permits and Public Contracts: Annual 1980-1983 and December 1984*, Construction Reports, C40 series

BUSINESS IN NEBRASKA

PREPARED BY BUREAU OF BUSINESS RESEARCH

Member Association for University Business & Economic Research

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Vol. 40 No. 491 August 1985

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